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The Woman whose son died as he entered his bridal chamber (4 Ezra 9 and 10)*

J C O'Neill

As Gunkel saw, 4 Ezra 9 and 10 contains an ancient tradition about a woman whose son died as he entered his bridal chamber. This tradition is more extensive than Gunkel thought, and reaches its conclusion in the transfiguration and ascension of the woman with a cosmic upheaval caused by her cry. The woman's son was seen to represent the Messiah. Another ancient tradition about a city that comes down from heaven has been woven together with the woman tradition. A later interpreter of the combined traditions has given the combination a messianic reading.

Did anyone in Judaism at the time of Jesus think that the Messiah had to come in obscurity and die before he would return in glory to inherit the Kingdom? This question, for so long dismissed as an impossibility, partly on the basis of 1Cor 1. 22-25, is again being asked with new seriousness (O'Neill: 1995, 96-97, 121 *et passim*). The Fourth Book of Ezra (2 Esdras 3-14 in the English AV Apocrypha) contains two mentions of the death of a son, the death of the Son of God in 7.29, and the death of the son of a Woman in 10.1. Perhaps there is also another death implied, the previous death of the man from the sea in 13.3, for the sea represents the realm of chaos and of death.

This paper is devoted to the story of the woman who goes out of the city into a field and mourns the death of a long-awaited son who died as he entered his bridal chamber, 4 Ezra 9.38-10.4.

Gunkel has performed the great service of showing that this section must have had an independent existence before it was incorporated into our book, and Michael Stone pretty well concedes the validity of Gunkel's case. Stone notes the peculiar names for God (9.45a, *God*; 9.45b, *The Strong One* or *God* or *Most High*; 9.44, variants to *Most High* of *God* [Arabic 1], *the Lord* [Arabic 2]; see Violet); the Rabbinic parallels (PesRab 26 [Friedmann 131b]; the prophet

Jeremiah met a woman mourning the death of her seven sons when the house fell in and her husband was away, Stone: 1990, 321); the neighbours of 9.45 who play no further part in the story and do not appear in the interpretation (and note some other neighbours who do mourn Sion when some refuse, 10.8); and five further features of the story that are not interpreted in the allegorical key, 10.42-48 (the daily and hourly prayer of 9.44; the death on the wedding night, 10.1; the extinguishing of the lamps, 10.2; the mourning until the second night, 10.3).

However, when we pay close attention to the whole section from 9.23 to the end of chapter 10, we cannot rest easy in a theory that discovers only one source, the remainder being regarded as the work of a writing prophet. There are too many discrepancies to make that theory tenable.

Notice that the vision of a city that is built that hath foundations (10.27b-28, 51-55) is a distraction from the central simple drama of the woman. Both involve the seer who is in a field outside the city (Table, A: 9.24-26; 10.32; 10.51-54; B: 9.29 [desert]; 10.3-4; 10.17-18). Both have the seer lying down and troubled in mind (A: 9.27; B: 10.30). An angel comes in both accounts (A: 10.28, 30-32; B: 10.29-30). There are two separate explanations, an explanation of the empty field where a city has been built (A: 10.51-55) and an explanation of the death of the son, and of the cry, the transfiguration and the disappearance of the woman (B: 10.38-41, 49-50). Of course, the idea of Jerusalem as mother is to hand in the Bible and is often exploited—as in the special addition to the Amida for the Ninth of Ab cited by Michael Stone (1990, 322; Singer: 1962, 105). The idea is mentioned explicitly (Zion, the mother of us all, 10.7), but the images of the woman and that of the city are not integrated in story form.

Notice above all that the allegorical interpretation of the vision makes nothing of the bridal chamber and does not explain the transfiguration of the woman.

Let us start with the allegorical interpretation, 10.42-48 (see Table, C). The text is damaged at the reference to Solomon in 10.46, so badly damaged that here we must, I think, accept the longer reading

of L as the original rather than as an attempt to mend a damaged text. (L has the better reading also at 3.24: *And Solomon his son built a house for your name and set up a sacrificial altar in it on which the priests would bring you offerings as you commanded Moses your servant.*) The problem is, If the woman stands for Jerusalem, what does her son stand for? Stone's lucid section on the allegory (1990, 334-6) fails to resolve the matter because he tries both to make the woman bear all the weight of the allegory and to reduce the son to "a cardboard player". If we can accept the longer reading at 10.46, everything falls into place: the woman is Jerusalem and the son the Temple. There is, of course, no use for the bridal imagery nor for the woman's transfiguration. The allegory works from the starting point of 10.27, where the woman disappears and the city appears in her place (see Table, A: 10.27b; B: 10.27a). But we have seen that there were probably two originally independent stories, one of the city that is built that hath foundations and the other of a woman whose long-awaited son died. The story of the woman who lost her son on his wedding night contained the prophet's rebuke of the mourning woman in which he reminded her of the greater plight of Zion (10.5-8), "the Mother of us all" (10.7; cf. 10.8 Syriac). This story had already attracted another tradition about the desolation of Zion (Table, B3: 10.19-23). These references to Zion would have naturally prompted a compiler to bring in another tradition about a city that comes down from heaven, the New Zion (Table, A). The allegorist who combined the traditions A and B identified the city with the woman and the temple with the son (10.42). It follows that the allegorical interpretation is later than the combination of the two stories.

We seem to have before us four distinct sources. A fairly literal translation of the Latin of 9.23-10.60, with reference, where necessary, to the other versions, is given below, rearranged to show the four sources (see Table). The longest of these, the second (B), has received traditional surcharges (B1, B2 and B3).

Section C (10.42-48) is based on a text in which sources A and B were already combined, because section C works from the identification of the woman with the city, an identification that could only arise from the combination of A and B. It offers an

allegorical interpretation of A and B.

Source A (9.23-27; 10.27b-28; 10.30c-33a, 51-55) is about the seer's fear when he sees a vision of a city that was built having foundations, and comes to believe that he will be excluded from that city (10.27b-28). Because he has admitted that his prayer may well be a reproach (10.28), he is comforted at the end by the invitation to go in to the city and to see its splendour (10.55).

Source B (9.28-30; 9.38-10.8; 10.15-18, 24-27a, 29-30, 33b-41, 49-50) begins with a prayer of the seer for enlightenment (9.28-30). It contains the story of the vision of the woman who came out of the city in mourning for her son who died on the night he entered his bridal chamber. It is surcharged with traditional passages. B1 (9.31-37) is an elaborate meditation on the Law which, unlike other things which perish leaving their container unharmed, itself never perishes, while the "containers", the people who should have cherished it, do perish. This passage does not quite fit the context. It seems to have been inserted here because 9.30 referred to the *seed* of Jacob, and this tradition concerns the Law which is *sown* in you. B2 (10.9-14) seems to be a traditional word of comfort (rather in the spirit of Job's comforters) for a woman who has lost a child. The argument is that the earth is enormously fertile, yet only a tiny portion of her seeds come to fruition. To the woman's complaint that she has suffered the pangs of childbirth, the reply seems to be that the earth, too, suffers pangs in giving fruit to its Maker (cf. 1En 45.4-5; 51.4-5; 2 Bar 32.6; 44.12; 57.2; 4 Ezra 7.75; 11.46; 13.26; Rom 8.19-22). B3 (10.19-23) is a beautiful word of consolation, listing all the terrible things that have happened to Zion, but drawing from that the hope that the very handing over of the seal of Zion to those who hate Israel must be the prelude to God's intervention on behalf of his people. It has no particular relevance to the mourning mother but fits the theme of the sufferings of Sion already mentioned by the seer in his rebuke of the woman in 10.5-15, itself an ancient tradition.

D (10.56-60) is the beginning of a new collection, put here because the end of Source A talks of the vision of your *eyes* (10.55) and the beginning of Source D speaks of the hearing of your *ears* (10.56).

These sources were all put together for fairly superficial reasons. A source about a vision of a city come down from heaven in a vacant field would go together with a source about a mourning woman, because Zion is our mother and the mourning woman was asked to consider the plight of Zion. But there is no actual connection between a story of a city coming down from heaven (10.27b, 51-55) and a story of a woman who bears a son who dies which ends with the woman's being snatched up into heaven (10.25-27a, 50).

If there is anything in my argument, we are required to regard the story of the woman who mourned her son (B) as longer than in Gunkel's reconstruction; the source in fact had an ending. Stone had to imagine a lost ending, but this does not seem likely to me. The ending has the transfiguration of the woman, her uttering a cry that shakes the whole earth and her disappearance (10.25b-27a), and the explanation of the angel in which he emphasizes that the seer's attempts to console the woman led to his vision of her glory (10.33b-50).

What did this mean? The woman here is not Jerusalem but an especially favoured woman who first receives a son in her long period of barrenness, who prepares him for his wedding, who loses him as Tobias's bride lost her previous seven husbands, but who, by her persistence in mourning, even unto death, is transfigured. She it is who utters a cry that shakes the whole earth (cf. the cosmic upheavals that accompany the birth of the Marvellous Counsellor in 1QH 3.7-10).

I do not see any other reasonable interpretation of this story than that the Woman is the Mother of the the Son of God. Her child is the Messiah. He dies as he is about to marry his bride, which is, of course Jerusalem, representing the faithful. His Mother mourns his death, but her mourning will have an end when her glory is revealed and her voice shakes the earth as she brings the Messiah to birth again, this time to reign. The seer who saw the vision is assured that his sorrow has been rewarded by a vision of the woman's glory, the glory of the Mother of the Messiah (10.29-30, 33b-41, 49-50).

The seer employed a traditional word of comfort (10.16) which was originally a general admonition to a mother who mourned the loss

of a child to accept God's will so that she would receive praise as a righteous woman among women, be raised from the dead at the general resurrection, and receive back the child she mourned. Its use in the story was particularly appropriate because the story, although primarily a vision of the Mother of the Messiah, was built on the view that the Messiah who died would return in glory. This idea is most clear in 2 Baruch 30.1; SibOr 5.256-259, but is also implied in the emergence of the man from the sea (4 Ezra 13.1-4) (O'Neill: 1991; 1995, 96-97).

The allegorical interpretation, section C, also bears further examination. If my reading above was correct, it is also messianic. The combination of the two ideas of the woman and the city is traditional. The suggestion that the woman's son is the Temple may also be traditional. The woman bears a son; Solomon builds a Temple. The Temple is destroyed. What is the reader of the allegory as attached to the combined stories of the city and the mourning woman to expect? The seer at first saw the likeness of a woman no more, but a city that is being built appeared to him (10.42); the reader who saw the likeness of the old city no more would expect to see the Heavenly Jerusalem in which there was no temple since "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Rev 21.22). The return of the Lord to Jerusalem was associated in the Judaism of the Eighteen Benedictions with the reign of the Messiah; the fourteenth benediction reads:

And to Jerusalem, thy city, return in mercy, and dwell therein as thou hast spoken; rebuild it soon in our days as an everlasting building, and speedily set up therein the throne of David. (Singer: 1962, 51)

The strange reference in John 2.21, *But he was speaking of the temple of his body*, is perhaps not after all "a comical expression of bewilderment" ("eine komische Auskunft der Verlegenheit" Bultmann: 1941, 89 n. 1) but a reference to an old Jewish tradition that the return of the Messiah would be the restoration of the glory of the Temple to Jerusalem (Rev 21.22-23). Elsewhere in John we have a reference to the water flowing from the side of the Messiah compared to the water flowing from the Temple (John 7.37-38;

Ezek 47.1-12; see Beasley-Murray).

From 4 Ezra 9.23-10.60 we may add two more to the list of possible passages showing that some Jews expected that the Messiah would die before he came to reign in glory: B and C in the Table.

Judaism had to hand a rich storehouse of images linking the past history of God's dealings with his people with their future hopes of restoration. Eve, who bore both Cain and Abel, would bear one who would bruise Satan's head and whose heel Satan would bruise. Jerusalem is a barren woman who travails with child and brings forth more children than the married (Isa 54; Gal 4.26). The Temple was revealed in vision to Adam, to Abraham, and to Moses, and it is the glory of Jerusalem, the City of David (2 Baruch 4.1-7). The Lord would give a sign: a virgin should conceive and bear a son (Isa 7.14). Each of these images was sharp, and each was set in a larger framework of belief: that God, who had created men and women, who had chosen Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who had sent Moses and raised up David, would redeem his people and restore Paradise and bring the new Jerusalem and the new Temple. There David's son would reign. When the ancient traditional visions came to be written down, a vision such as that of the heavenly Jerusalem, which was clear and exact, could easily be combined with a vision of a woman who mourned a son. The reason? Jerusalem was a Mother. The resulting mixture we moderns try to read as literature, the work of an author—and we become confused. Those for whom the traditions were written read slowly, and meditated on each picture as it came up. They also read as sharing the credal framework within which the visions originated and were preserved. Each vision to them remained sharp, and all the visions cohered in one overarching plan of salvation.

We moderns need gently to separate the original self-contained visions before we can rightly read the texts as they were meant to be understood by the community of faith that preserved them.

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* This a revision of a paper given to the seminar on Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha & Scrolls at the British New Testament conference at Nottingham on Friday, 16 September, 1994. I am indebted to the perceptive criticisms of the paper that were made then, particularly to those of the leader, George Brooke, University of Manchester. I am also grateful to Peter Hayman for letting me see his unpublished commentary on 2 Esdras for the Oxford Bible Commentary.

Table
The Component Parts of 4 Ezra 9.23-10.60

A	B	B1	B2	B3	C	D
The City	The Woman	Seed Not Destroyed	Earth's Loss	Zion's Plight	Meaning of A+B	Intro. to Next Section
9.23-27	9.28-30	9.31-37	10.9-14	10.19-23	10.42-48	10.56-60
	9.38-10.8					
	10.15-18					
	10.24-27a					
10.27b-28	10.29-30					
10.30c-33a	10.33b-41					
10.51-55	10.49-50					

Each verse is numbered. The point at which another source has been incorporated is marked by the jump in verse numbers; the verse at which the source resumes is marked by adding 4 Ezra as well as the chapter and verse (e.g. A: 9.27 resumes at 4 Ezra 10.27b).

A *The Vision of the City*

4 Ezra 9.23

Now then, as for you,

O that you would let seven more days pass!
But do not fast in them.

9.24

Go then into a field of flowers
where no house is built.
And eat only of the flowers of the field
and do not eat flesh
and do not drink wine
but only flowers.

9.25

And pray to the Most High without ceasing
and I will come and speak to you.

9.26

And I went forth as he told me
to the field that is called Ardat
and I sat there among the flowers
and I ate of the herbs of the field
and their nourishment was made completely satisfying.

9.27

And it came to pass after seven days
and I was lying on the grass
and my heart was troubled again as before.

4 Ezra 10.27b

But then a city was built
and a place was shown
as having great foundations
and I was afraid
and I cried out with a loud voice and said,

10.28

Where is Uriel
the angel who came to me from the beginning?
For it is he who made me come
in the multitude of the excess of this mind;
and it has come to pass that my end is in corruption
and my prayer a reproach.

4 Ezra 10.30c

And he said to me,

10.31

What troubles you

and why are you disturbed
and what has unsettled your mind
and the sense of your heart?

And I said,

10.32

Because you deserting me have deserted me.
For I did what you told me
and I went out into the field
and behold I saw
and I see what it is not possible to explain.

10.33a

And he said to me,

4 Ezra 10.51

That is why I told you to remain in the field
where no house is built.

10.52

For I knew that the Most High
was about to reveal these things to you.

10.53

Therefore I told you to come into the field
where there is no foundation of a building

10.54

for neither can [it] support the work of the building of a man
in the place where the city of the Most High is to be revealed.

10.55

You, therefore, do not be afraid
nor let your heart be terrified
but enter
and see the splendor and size of the building
as far as the vision of your eyes is able to see it.

B *The Vision of the Woman who Mourned her Son*

4 Ezra 9.28

And my mouth was opened
and I began to speak in the presence of the Most High
and I said,

9.29

O Lord, in showing us [yourself]

you have showed [yourself] to our fathers in the desert
when they came out of Egypt
and when they travelled in the desert
that was trackless and infertile.

9.30

And in saying you said,
You, Israel, hear me,
and seed of Jacob attend to my words.

4 Ezra 9.38

And while I spoke this in my heart
I lifted up my eyes
and I saw a woman on the right side.
Behold she was mourning
and weeping with a loud voice
and she was very grieved in mind
and her clothes were torn
and there was dust upon her head.

9.39

And I put aside the thoughts which I had been thinking
and I turned to her

9.40

and I said to her,
Why do you weep
and why are you distressed in soul?

9.41

and she said to me,
Allow me, my lord,
to weep and to continue to sigh
since I am greatly embittered in soul
and I am deeply humbled.

9.42

And I said to her,
What has happened to you?
Tell me.

9.43

And she said to me,
I, your handmaid, was barren and did not bear
though I had a husband for thirty years.

9.44

For I every hour and every day
prayed for thirty years to the Most High night and day.
9.45

And it came to pass after thirty years
that God heard me,
(heard the voice of) your handmaid
and saw my humiliation
and looked on my distress
and gave me a son.
And I rejoiced greatly over him,
I and my husband and all my fellow-citizens
and we gave glory to the Mighty One.
9.46

And I reared him with great labour.
9.47
And it came to pass when he had grown up
and I came to take a wife for him
and I set the day for the marriage feast.

10.1
And it came to pass when my son entered the bridal chamber
he fell down and died.

10.2
And we overturned all the lamps
and all my fellow-citizens rose up to console me
and I remained quiet until the next day and until night.

10.3
And it came to pass
when they all had fallen still to console me
that I might be quiet
[Syr: And after they were all asleep
and believed that I had fallen asleep]
and I arose by night and fled
and I came, as you see [me] in this field.

10.4
And I now am resolved not to return to the city
but to stay here,
and I will neither eat nor drink
but without ceasing will mourn and fast until I die.

10.5

And I left the reflections in which I was engaged
and I replied with anger to her and said,

10.6

Foolish are you above all women.

Do you not see our mourning
and the things that have befallen us

10.7

that Zion, the mother of us all,

is grieved with grief

and is humbled with humiliation?

10.8

You [plural] ought to mourn,

for even now we all mourn,

and you [plural] ought to be sad

for we all are sad.

For you [singular] are even sad for one son

but we, the whole world, for our mother [Syriac].

10.15 Now therefore keep your grief to yourself

and bear bravely the troubles that have come upon you.

10.16

For if you acknowledge

the decree of God to be just

you will surely receive your son back in time

and you will be praised among women.

10.17

So go into the city to your husband

10.18

And she said to me,

I will not do it,

nor will I enter the city

but I will die here.

4 Ezra 10.24

[I say to you]

You should shake off you great sadness

and put away from you the multitude of your sorrows

so that [= for] the Mighty One will be merciful to you again

and the Most High will give you rest

as a respite from your troubles.

10.25

And it came to pass while I was speaking to her
and behold her face shone exceedingly bright
and as the appearance of lightning became the look of her face
[Syriac] so that I was afraid to approach her
and my heart was much amazed.

And while I was wondering what this was
10.26

and behold she suddenly emitted the sound of a voice,
loud and completely terrifying,
so that the earth was shaken at her voice.

10.27a

and I looked
and behold the woman was no longer visible to me.

4 Ezra 10.29

[Editorial: And while I was saying this

And behold the angel came to me
who had at the beginning come to me
and he saw me

10.30

and behold I was lying as though dead
and my mind was astray
and he took my right hand
and strengthened me
and stood me on my feet.

4 Ezra 10.33b

Stand up like a man and I will instruct you.

10.34

And I said,
Speak, my lord,
and only do not forsake me
lest I die in error,

10.35

for I have seen what I do not understand
and I hear what I cannot grasp.

10.36

Or is it that my sense fails me
and my soul is dreaming?

10.37

Now, therefore, I pray you, explain to me

about this death.

10.38

And he replied to me and said,
Hear me and I will teach you,
and I will speak to you of the things you fear
for the Most High has revealed to you many secrets.

[Wellhausen: a great mystery]

10.39

For he has seen your right conduct
since without ceasing you grieve for your people
and greatly mourn for Zion.

10.40

[And he said,]

This then is the meaning of your vision.

10.41

The woman who appeared to you a little while ago
whom you saw mourning
and whom you began to console,

4 Ezra 10.49

and behold you saw her likeness
how she mourns a son
and you began to console her for the things that happened to her:
these are to be opened to you.

10.50

And now, since the Most High sees that you are grieving in your
soul
and that with all your heart you sorrow on her account,
he shows you the clear light of her glory
and the beauty of her loveliness.

B1 *Seed Not Destroyed*

4 Ezra 9.31

[Thus says the Lord]

For behold I sow in you my Law
and bring forth in you fruit
and you will be glorified in it for ever.

9.32

However our fathers receiving the law

did not obey it
and the commandments
they did not keep
and it came to pass that the fruit of the law is not perishing
for it cannot perish
since it is yours.

9.33

But those who received it perished
from not keeping that which was sown in them.

4 Ezra 9.34

And behold it is the rule
that if the earth receives seed
or the sea a ship
or any vessel food or drink
and when anything comes to destroy
what is sown

or what is sent to sea
or what is put in a vessel

9.35

they are destroyed
but the receptacles remain;
yet with us that is not what has come to pass.

9.36

We too who receive the law
by sinning will perish,
and our heart that has received it.

9.37

For the law does not perish
but remains in all its honour [glory].

B2 *Earth's Loss compared with the Loss of a Child*

4 Ezra 10.9

For ask the earth and she will tell you
that she it is who ought to mourn
so many germinated upon her
[but she doesn't].

10.10

From her are the beginnings,

Who, therefore, ought to mourn the more:
she who has lost so great a multitude
or you who sorrow for one?

But if you say to me,
My mourning is not like the earth's
since I have lost the fruit of my womb
which I bore with pains
and I brought forth with sorrow

whereas with the earth
it is according to the way of the earth:
the multitude which is present in it goes away
in the same manner as it came.

I in turn will say to you,
as you with sorrow bore a man
so also the earth gives its fruit [with sorrow]
from the beginning to Him who made it [her?]

B3 *Zion's Plight is so Great that Consolation is at Hand*

And I added another speech and said to her,

Do not speak [Gloss: this speech: *hunc* om. S*]
but allow yourself to be persuaded
of the plight of Zion
and be consoled
because of the sorrow of Jerusalem.

For you see that our sanctuary is made desolate
and our altar is demolished
and our temple is destroyed

and our psalmody is laid low
and our hymnody is silenced
and our cry of exultation is ended
and our lampstand has been extinguished
and the ark of the covenant is carried away
and our holy vessels are defiled
and the name that is named over us is profaned
and our nobles suffer dishonour
and our priests are immolated
and our Levites go into captivity
and our virgins are defiled
and our wives are raped
and our righteous are carried off
and our children are expelled
and our young men are taken captive
and our warriors are made powerless.

10.23

And, what is worse than all this,
is that the seal of Zion has been surrendered.
[What is there to say] of her glory now?
It has even been handed over to those who hate us.

C

The Meaning of (A) plus (B)

4 Ezra 10.42

For now indeed you see the likeness of the woman no more
but a city that is being built appears to you

10.43

and since she told you about the death of her son
this is the solution.

10.44

This woman whom you saw,
this is Zion
which you now see as a city that is built.

10.45

And whereas she said to you that she was barren thirty years
that is because there were three times a thousand years
when there was no [temple] offering offered in her.

10.46

And it came to pass after these three years
that Solomon [following L] built the walls of the city of Jerusalem
and a temple for the Lord in her
and offered oblations;
then it was that the barren one bore a son.

10.47

And whereas she said to you
that she brought him up with much labour
that is the period of residence [of the Shekinah (Box)] in Jerusalem.

10.48

And whereas she said to you,
My son on coming into the bridal chamber was struck dead,
that was what came to pass,
the ruin of Jerusalem.

D *The Blessed Seer to See What Will Happen in the Last Days*
 (Beginning of a New Section)

4 Ezra 10.56

And after these things you will hear
as much as the hearing of your ears allows,

10.57

for you are blessed above many
and are named before the Most High as but few.

10.58

But you are to remain here until tomorrow night

10.59

and the Most High will show you
those visions in dreams
of what the Most High will do to those who live upon the earth
in the last days.

10.60

And I slept there that night and the next
as he commanded me.

Scalometry and the Dating of The New Testament Epistles

Dr. George K. Barr

Abstract

Scalometry reveals core material in the Pauline epistles that may be identified with the first session of dictation. Other material may be regarded as afterthoughts. 1 and 2 Peter and Hebrews show prime patterns that are different from the Pauline patterns. A wide survey of literature ancient and modern has failed to produce any comparable patterns and the possibility that these prime patterns reflect authorship must be seriously considered. This has a dramatic effect on the possible dating of New Testament epistles and gives new significance to evidence that has long been familiar.

Since 1995 eight articles involving scalometric evidence have appeared in issues of *Irish Biblical Studies*¹. These articles have been concerned with the Pauline Epistles, The Petrine Epistles and Hebrews, the Revelation, the question of literary dependence in the New Testament, the preaching of Paul and Silvanus, and scale changes in the Gospels and Acts. The new evidence provided by these various investigations requires that fresh consideration should be given to the dating of the New Testament epistles.

The opinions of scholars vary widely in this regard, but an indication of mainstream scholarship may be obtained by referring to Kümmel's *Introduction to the New Testament*². Kümmel places

1 IBS 17, 1995, 22-41; IBS 18, 1996, 16-25; IBS 19, 1997, 17-31, 121-132 and 147-160; IBS 20, 1998, 75-91 and 98-113; IBS 21, 1999, 101-117.

2 Kümmel, W.G., *Introduction to the New Testament*, London: SCM Press, 1975.

Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Philemon within the context of Paul's travels as recorded in Acts (50 –58 AD).

Ephesians he regards as post-Pauline, dating it 80-100. The Pastoral Epistles he regards as coming pseudonymously from one hand about the beginning of the second century. James he places towards the end of the first century "in view of the conceptual distance from Paul"³. Hebrews he dates between 80 and 90. He places 1 Peter at 90-95 in Domitian's reign, Jude at the turn of the second century and 2 Peter in the second quarter of the second century. Ephesians, the Pastorals, James, 1 and 2 Peter and Jude are all held to be pseudonymous works, written at unknown times in unknown places by unknown authors who left no other works by which they might be identified. Because pseudonymous writing was not unknown in the ancient world, Kümmel apparently finds this quantity of pseudonymous writing in the New Testament to be acceptable. The scalometric evidence does not support such a conclusion.

Assessing scalometric evidence

Data obtained through the use of one particular discipline may not properly be assessed by the conventions of another discipline. For example, statistical method has played an increasing part in Biblical and other literary studies in recent years and it is becoming accepted that in order to assess the significance of statistical data it is necessary to have some knowledge of statistics. Such data cannot be assessed using criteria that are found to be appropriate in other branches of literary criticism. Neither can scalometric data be competently assessed by the conventions of a discipline in which the existence of scale in literature is not recognised. One must beware of the transference of authority from one discipline to another.

Literature is a creative art, and every work of literature has its locus at a particular point in the scale spectrum. An understanding of scale

³ *Ibid.*, p.414.

and scaling effects as they are found in the visual arts is essential in assessing the significance of scalometric data. At this point, scholars in the mainstream of Biblical studies are faced with a dilemma because the concepts used in scalometry belong to an unfamiliar discipline and these concepts have not previously found an application in Biblical studies.

Works of literature show scale variations that affect statistical counts and to ignore these variations is to neglect useful evidence. Works of literature may show scale-related patterns that have not as yet been detected by other disciplines and to neglect these is to ignore links that provide valuable connections between works.

Just as it has taken some time for statistical method to be absorbed into mainstream Biblical studies, so it will take time for scalometric method to be accepted. It requires study, and it is not competent to judge scalometric data by criteria that do not take account of the existence of scale in literature.

Punctuation of New Testament texts

On reviewing recent New Testament studies I have found that some scholars are reluctant to accept any method that relies upon sentence length. A sweeping generalisation on this matter is unwise. The question that has to be asked is whether the differences found in the various interpretations of sentence length are significant when compared with the strength of the patterns that are revealed. As far as New Testament scalometry is concerned, the variations resulting from different editors' interpretations of the punctuation of the texts are small indeed when they are compared with the strong patterns revealed by scalometry. Significant features appear irrespective of the edition used.

There are two significant questions regarding punctuation. The first is how to deal with strings of questions that are not in scale with their contexts. It must be appreciated that an interrogation mark does not always have the force of a full stop. In this I have followed L.D. Reynolds who in his 1965 edition of the letters of Seneca, grouped the short questions according to their content. The effect of

this is to provide word groups that are nearer in scale to that of the context than the short questions were when each was considered to be a complete sentence. The problem is at its most acute in the epistle to Romans and the adjustment of strings of short questions is enough to restore the major features that are found in all the other major Pauline epistles. The problem arises to a much lesser extent in 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians. This adjustment alone cannot possibly create a Pauline pattern; it can only clarify a pattern that is already there.

The second question concerns the differences in punctuation that are found in the standard modern editions of the New Testament texts. These differences are not extensive and usually depend upon the choice of a colon or a full stop. It must be appreciated that a colon is often a sign of continuity rather than a stop. In recent years I have modified my method in this regard in order to eliminate any subjectivity on my part in arriving at a preferred text. I have made use of two versions – UBS3 (latterly UBS4) and Souter's 1910 version for which I have considerable respect. The sentence divisions in these editions represent the judgement of scholars of note. When the strings of questions have been appropriately grouped, a trial graph will show clearly the rhythmic structure and the main divisions into high-scale and low-scale sections. It is possible then to locate each point at which there is a difference between UBS4 and Souter. If such a point occurs in a section with relatively high-scale characteristics, then the version that uses the colon is chosen (as it produces longer sentences). If it occurs in a low-scale section then the version that uses a full stop is chosen (as that results in shorter sentences). In this way, I make no subjective judgement myself, but accept the solution that is most likely to ensure that the text is in scale with its context. While on occasion I would like to refine this further, this straightforward procedure is enough to clarify the Pauline patterns.

The characteristic Pauline pattern

The characteristic Pauline pattern that appears in the cumulative sum graphs⁴ is created by the combination of two features. The first is the unusual rhythmic sense that produces alternating groups of longer and shorter sentences. The second is the habit of beginning an epistle with a high-scale section that has a comparatively high mean sentence length, followed by a low-scale section comprising an almost equal number of shorter sentences. These two features combine to give a "prime pattern" (my term) that can be mimicked on the computer. The computer model provides a series of patterns of varying complexity that may be compared with graphs of the texts. A close correspondence cannot be expected as texts are very human productions, but the main features of the structure show clearly. These comparisons show that the differences between the various epistles are differences of complexity and not of kind.

It cannot be denied, for example, that Galatians (using UBS text unadjusted) begins with 49 sentences averaging over 22 words in length, followed by 44 sentences averaging less than 17 words in length. This difference of 23% between the mean sentence lengths of substantial consecutive sections of text might be explained by a change in genre (in Galatians the first part is about Law and the latter part about Faith). But neither can it be denied that an even more pronounced change occurs in Philippians. The initial high-scale section of 29 sentences has a mean sentence length of almost 33 words, and the following low-scale section of 33 sentences has a mean sentence length of less than 21 words. A 37% difference in mean sentence length between consecutive sections of text requires explanation, and in Philippians there is no corresponding change in genre. So in some cases this dramatic change in scale is related to a change in genre; in other cases it is not. It has become a personal

⁴ For a full description of cumulative sum graphs see Barr, G.K., "The Use of Cumulative Sum Graphs in Literary Scalometry", *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (1997); 103-111.

pattern. This dramatic contrast in scale combines with the alternating groups of longer and shorter sentences to produce a characteristic pattern that is found in all the Pauline epistles, but how may its significance be judged?

The significance of Pauline prime patterns

I coined the term "prime pattern" because these always occur at the beginning of a text. This is such a regular feature that it is very likely that these patterns correspond to a first session of dictation. In every case it is a reasonable explanation that the prime pattern corresponds to a first session and that following material is in the nature of afterthoughts. This view also makes sense of the Corinthian correspondence where prime patterns appear at the beginning of 1 Corinthians and also at 2 Corinthians 10 (the beginning of the so-called Severe Letter from which only greetings are missing). The rest of the Corinthian correspondence consists of small topical material with a small pattern to each topic.

There is only one way to be certain that these prime patterns are unique to Paul, and that is to draw graphs of all other literary works ever written and to scrutinise them in order to confirm that no one else ever wrote in that manner. Clearly that is not possible. It is also statistically likely that such a pattern will infrequently crop up at random, purely by chance.

To put this to the test I have drawn, over a period of years, the graphs of all the *New Testament* texts, the *Epistles of Ignatius*, the complete works of *Isocrates*, the forensic speeches of *Isaeus*, the 124 *Epistolae Morales* of *Seneca*, 1 and 2 *Clement*, *Polycarp to Philippians*, *Didache*, *Barnabas*, *Martyrdom of Polycarp* and the *Epistle to Diognetus*. I have also scrutinised graphs of modern material including works by Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin, short stories by Barbara Erskine and O. Henry, sermons and lectures by Prof. James S. Stewart, talks by Prof. William Barclay and many of my own sermons. In all this material I have found an occasional likeness to a Pauline epistle as one might expect, but on examining the text I found that there was no correspondence between the textual units and the features of the pattern such as is invariably

found in Pauline epistles. These rare instances were simply randomly occurring similarities of no significance.

There remains the question whether or not a pseudonymous writer might imitate, consciously or unconsciously, the patterns of a Pauline epistle. Such a pattern cannot be produced by copying vocabulary, ideas, syntactical patterns, or by imitating features that usually combine to form a writer's detectable "style". The broad contrast between Paul's opening high-scale section and the following low-scale section might be imitated by a writer who realised that an internal change of genre might be characteristic of Paul. Paul, however, does not rely on a change of genre to produce that effect and it is highly unlikely that any ancient writer would have such an insight. The Pauline pattern is, however, more complex than that. It requires the combination of the alternation of groups of sentences conceived at different scale levels with the broad contrast between the opening high-scale section and the following low-scale section. It is beyond belief that the only writers to be found who can produce this combination happen to be pseudonymous writers writing in the name of Paul. It is much easier to believe that Paul is the author and to re-think our views about Paul's abilities and circumstances. In preparing the cumulative sum graph of a work, the length of every sentence interacts with all the other sentences in producing the pattern, and even when one understands how the pattern is achieved it is extremely difficult to write a piece that gives a passable imitation of a Pauline pattern.

The test material listed above represents a prodigious amount of work, but that is the kind of exercise that is necessary before a critic can assess the data provided by scalometry. A competent assessment cannot be made by simply applying the conventions of a discipline that does not recognise the existence of scale in literature.

The extent of the Pauline corpus – Ephesians and Colossians

I agree with Kümmel concerning the epistles listed above that are placed within the years of Paul's ministry, but I part company with him in his assessment of Ephesians and the Pastorals. Fig. 1 provides cumulative sum graphs of the prime patterns of Ephesians (1:1-5:33) and Colossians (1:1-4:18). These graphs show how the

rhythms of the stepped patterns (reflecting alternation of sentence groups) and the contrast between the **A** and **B** sections are mirrored by the model. There are differences in the complexity of the patterns but they exhibit the same features. I do not believe it possible that a pseudonymous writer could achieve such a match in patterns that are created below the level of consciousness. The first session in dictating Ephesians ended with the vision of marriage in terms of Christ and the Church. Notice how extended this section is, while the rest of the Household Code that follows consists of single verses relating to each class of person. Clearly, Paul had thought through his material before dictation and this vision of Christ and the Church was the culmination of his train of thought. The rest of the Household Code is an afterthought in its standard form, to which he has added a short exhortation. (This added material appears below the base line in the graph, as the graph is based on the mean sentence length of the prime material.) In my view, Ephesians is the earlier epistle. When Paul came to write Colossians to a different group under different circumstances, he recast his material entirely. The Household Code appears entirely in its short form (in contrast to Ephesians the advice to husbands and wives occupies only a brief verse for each) and it lies entirely within the prime pattern. Ephesians must therefore be dated close to Colossians, somewhere between 56 and 60 AD. To give an impression of the main features of the Pauline prime pattern I have shown in fig. 2 graphs of Galatians (which is a smaller scale version of Romans), Philippians, 1 Cor. 1-6, and 2 Cor. 10:1-12:19a. The Pastorals require special consideration.

The extent of the Pauline corpus - the Pastoral Epistles

The graphs of the Pastoral Epistles (fig. 3) show very clearly that there are insertions in 1 Timothy and Titus. In each case the insertion is concerned with the qualities required in church leaders. In Titus there is also a short passage concerning Cretans that is doubtful; it clearly does not belong to the prime pattern but may have been a spontaneous insertion during dictation. The second century insertions have been the cause of much trouble and misunderstanding, but if they are removed from the text then a much earlier form of church order becomes apparent and the prime

patterns are restored. It is significant that the insertions affect the two graphs in quite different ways, yet when they are removed the prime pattern in each case is restored.

In 2 Timothy the clue to the restoration of the original form of the text lies in the text itself, at 1:15 where verses are found concerning Phygelus, Hermogenes and Onesiphorus and some advice to Timothy (up to 2:7). Such verses would sit much more comfortably near the end of the letter. Placing 1:15-2:7 after 4:5 gives a continuous text and restores the prime pattern. The block accounts for about one ninth of the letter and moving it in this way transposes it from page 3 to page 7 (or pages in that proportion). With the restoration of these typically Pauline prime patterns, the Pastorals must find their place within the last period of Paul's life. Kenny's⁵ view that the statistics show that Titus cannot be genuine is not acceptable, because much of the statistical data was obtained from the inserted second century passages, and other important statistical features are content-related.

Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter and Jude

In an earlier paper (IBS 19, 1997, 17-31) I gave the graphs and the evidence which show that Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter have scale-related prime patterns that are different from the Pauline patterns. I have scrutinised the test material mentioned above that extends to well over half a million words and have not found any convincingly similar pattern anywhere else. I have to conclude that these three works come from the same hand. The evidence of the text (1 Peter 5:12) must not be ignored, and the writing of these three works may be attributed to Silvanus. I have indicated in the previous article how the differences in the quality of the Greek might be accounted for. The close links between these three works and the Pauline epistles demand an explanation that is not satisfactorily provided by mainstream studies. The points of contact between 1 Peter/Hebrews and several of the Paulines suggest themes that are eminently

⁵ Kenny, A. *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

suitable for missionary outreach and that one might expect to find in the common preaching material shared by the two evangelists. Hebrews and Romans both quote three of the favourite Old Testament quotations used in their preaching. The unusual vocabulary found in the Pastorals and Hebrews/1 and 2 Peter points to words used in such preaching, and to this further consideration is given below. The correspondences in these three works, and these links with the Paulines, suggest a dating within the period of Paul's journeys.

The Epistle of Jude forms an important link. Kümmel considers that the writer of 2 Peter used Jude as a source; Luther thought that Jude depended on 2 Peter. It is frequently found that scholars who claim that two works show dependence of one upon the other cannot produce good evidence as to which is the dependent author. In a previous article (*IBS* 19, 1997, p.147-160) I examined the problem of literary dependence and concluded that there was no evidence for dependence in the case of Jude and 2 Peter. It is inconceivable that an author could sit down with one text before him and by copying arrive at the other text. The answer is that both texts reflect a common store of preaching material that was used by the apostles repeatedly. This points to another apostolic mission.

Apostolic missions

Acts gives an inadequate account of the missions that were undertaken during the Pauline period, and the evidence of the epistles must be given priority. Three main missions are indicated. Acts indicates that Paul and Silvanus acted in partnership for the best part of three years; this is supported by the epistles. The prime pattern in Titus (with second century insertions removed) points to Pauline core material and this indicates a failed mission to Crete, which on principle the author of Acts would not mention. This may have taken place during Paul's longer stay in Ephesus, as Crete is only two days' sailing away from that city. The third mission is suggested by the greetings in 1 Peter 1:1, a mission to the northern parts of Asia Minor involving Peter and other apostles. Silvanus's writings (1 and 2 Peter and Hebrews) are to be placed after he left Paul's mission (after Acts 18:5) to join Peter's. Jude may have been

a member of the latter. The Epistle of Jude forms an important link in bringing Jude and Silvanus into the same company of preachers. The epistle of Jude and 2 Peter reflect the preaching material that was prepared by the apostles to meet a threat posed by false teaching. The common material is evident and even follows a similar order, but each author has written it up in his own way reflecting his own perceptions.

Conflict with false teaching

It is important to appreciate the nature of the false teaching that troubled the apostles. Modern critics require a target to hit and often look to the full-blown heresies of the second century to find that target. Silvanus was, as Acts 15:22 indicates, one of the “leading men among the brethren”. As the author of Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter, Silvanus was clearly a scholar of note. Paul and Silvanus worked and preached together for nearly three years. During that time they built up a body of preaching material that was particularly suited to evangelistic work in Greek speaking communities. On their travels, these evangelists visited towns, won converts and established house churches in very brief periods of time, and on their return to these places at a later date they found thriving congregations. That was not achieved through using the material and vocabulary found in Paul’s formal epistles.

The common people who heard Paul and his colleagues did not know of these heresies that flowered in the second century. The false teaching to which they were subject consisted of a rag-bag of half-believed and half-understood philosophical and religious maxims that constituted folklore, which the apostles categorised as “old wives’ tales” and “fables” involving temptation and corruption. The apostles showed that this consisted of “godless chatter, superstitions, senseless controversies, godless and silly myths” and in its place presented the themes of the *kerygma* that gave ordinary people a vision of a risen, living Lord and Saviour. That accounts for the extraordinary success of the apostles’ evangelism.

The mission to the north of Asia Minor provides the location for the Petrine and Jude and possibly Hebrews. In a previous paper (*IBS*

19, 1997, 147-160) I have examined the points of contact between Jude and 2 Peter. It is clear that the preachers in northern mission were faced with pressure from a group whose teaching displayed the first signs of a developing libertinism, possibly on Gnostic lines. Preaching material was prepared and used by members of the group who may have heard each other preaching repeatedly. In time, Jude and Silvanus wrote up the material each in his own way, reflecting his own perceptions. Common material appears in each version, in the same order, but the expression and the underlying perceptions are quite different.

The language of apostolic preaching

It is a mistake to believe that Paul's thinking dominated the missions of the apostolic bands. The Christian faith was not worked out by one person; much discussion and argument took place among the apostles. In connection with the epistle of James, Kümmel allows a period of 40 years "in view of the conceptual distance" between Paul's thinking and that of James. There is, however, no reason to suppose that there was a transition from the one to the other. Belief in salvation through works goes a long way back and it is likely that lively discussion on the subject took place among the apostles and that this was reflected in their epistles. The partnership of Paul and Silvanus, however, is of particular significance. When it is realised that the Pastoral Epistles did indeed come from Paul's hand, and that the Petrine Epistles and Hebrews came from that of Silvanus, then the points of contact between the two corpora and the unusual vocabulary shared by them assume a new significance.

Here it may be noted that the place of the secretary in these two corpora was rather different. Paul's secretaries wrote down exactly what he said, including each anacoluthon. Silvanus, on the other hand, had the freedom to express himself in his own way in writing the Petrine Epistles; hence the prime pattern is that of Silvanus. That is not to say that there was no input from Peter. The Petrine Epistles are not to be regarded as pseudonymous; they may very well convey thoughts that Peter wished his friend to convey. It is perverse to insist that the memories of Jesus that are found in 1 Peter are attempts by a pseudonymous writer to introduce a degree of

verisimilitude. 1 Peter 5:1 might well be translated, “I am an old man now, old enough to remember the sufferings of Christ...” and may well echo Peter’s words.

P.N. Harrison and others have held that because many of the unusual words found in the Pastorals also occur in the second century writings of the Fathers and the Apologists, the Pastorals must be pseudonymous second century productions. New thinking requires new vocabulary, and the argument might be cogent if it could be shown that the *hapaxes* consisted of new words coined to meet the development of theology in the second century. However, none of these unusual words show such signs. They are not theologically significant words; their outstanding characteristic is ordinariness. They are for the most part, words that could happily be used by the common people. Of Harrison’s 175 A1 words (found in the Pastorals but not elsewhere in the New Testament) 114 have cognates that are found in other Pauline epistles. Of 131 A2 words (found in the Pastorals and other New Testament books) 76% are found in the Gospels and Acts, which reflect not the second century but mid-first century oral tradition.

Of the “residue” of 82 words (found in the Pastorals but not in the New Testament, the Fathers or the Apologists) 68% are compound words. Some are distinguished only by an α -privative. Some have compound roots. Over 60% have roots that are found in the Paulines that Harrison accepts as genuine.

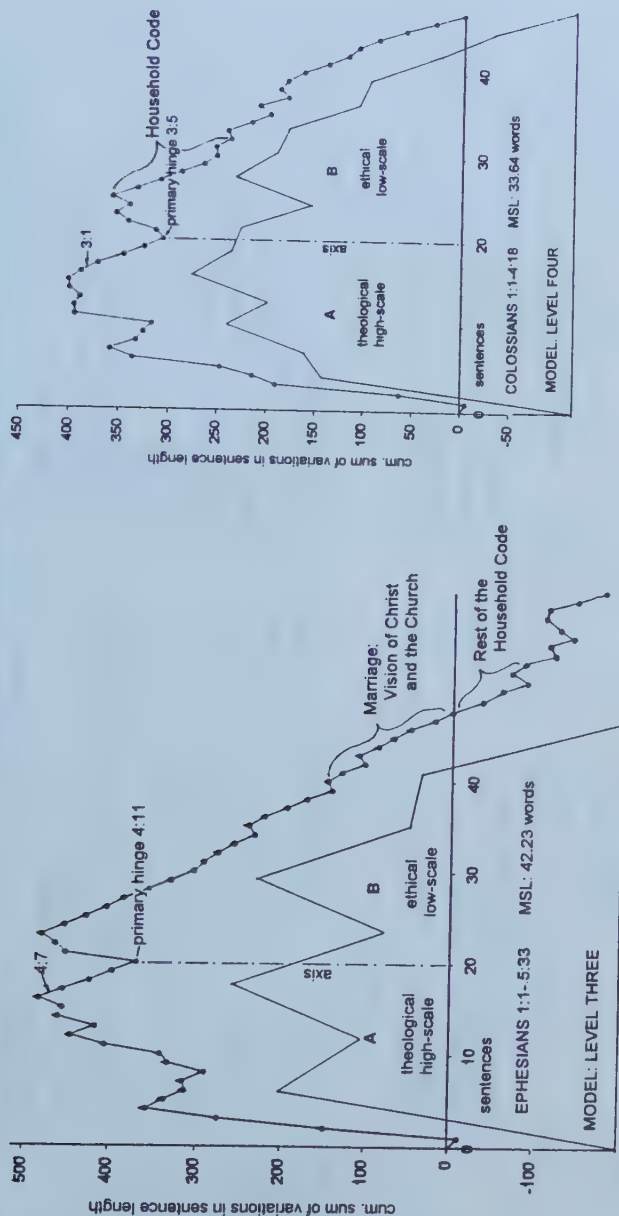
These data do not point to new second century vocabulary; they point rather to the use of dialect. Κοινή Greek could be used carefully and formally with literary intent, and in its more vulgar forms served the needs of uneducated people. Emphatic affixes, found in the *hapaxes*, are more often found in the colloquial use of words than in formal use that favours the simple verb. Compound words like “man-enslaver” (ἀνδραποδιστής) and “father-smiter” (πατραλάας) are more often found in dialect than in formal writing – compare the modern “lady-killer” and “baby-snatcher”. The use of the α -privative does not necessarily point to literary sophistication; rather it may suggest colloquial use. In modern dialects a similar device may be found; a negative is coupled with an adjective rather

than use the antonym. In rural Aberdeenshire a lady would not be called ugly, but it might be said that she was “nae bonny” – the equivalent of an α -privative. These indications, together with the occurrence of Grecisms, point to elements of dialect being used when Paul, Silvanus, Timothy and Titus conversed with each other and preached to common people. It is natural that such expressions would be found in Paul’s pastoral letters to his close colleagues, but not found in his formal epistles to congregations. It may also explain Paul’s astonishing success as an evangelist going into Greek-speaking territory. He met the common people and used the vulgar tongue they understood.

It is of great significance that these unusual words are found in the Pastorals and also in Sylvanus’s works (1 and 2 Peter and Hebrews). The language that Paul and Silvanus used day by day in conversation and in preaching is reflected in their pastoral letters, but not in Paul’s formal epistles. Sylvanus, however, did not make the distinction between formal and informal writing and a surprising number of them are found in Hebrews. This language developed into a pastoral genre that continued as a living voice and reappeared in the writings of the Fathers, who on the whole were pastors rather than academic authors.

Telescoping time

To understand what really happened during the years of Paul’s journeys, time has to be telescoped. Kümmel allows up to forty years to accommodate the change in conception from Paul’s views on faith to James’s views on works. That is perhaps an appropriate time to allow for such a change of thought in some modern academic settings, but it is a shot in the dark that is far from the mark with regard to Paul’s time. Paul did not live in a modern academic environment; he lived in a very tough world where events moved very fast indeed. The list of Paul’s sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11 is not a “literary device” as some critics would have it, but a reflection of the very dangerous life Paul lived. Perhaps critics need a stoning or two to appreciate this.



COMPARISON OF GRAPHS OF EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS AND MATHEMATICAL MODEL

Fig. 1 The first five chapters of Ephesians provide the prime pattern. Chapter 6 appears below the base line as an "afterthought" pattern. Note the extended section on marriage, which provides the culmination to the first session of dictation. The whole of Colossians provides a prime pattern. Note that the Household Code in Colossians is entirely in its short form and lies within the prime pattern. The material in Colossians has been completely recast.

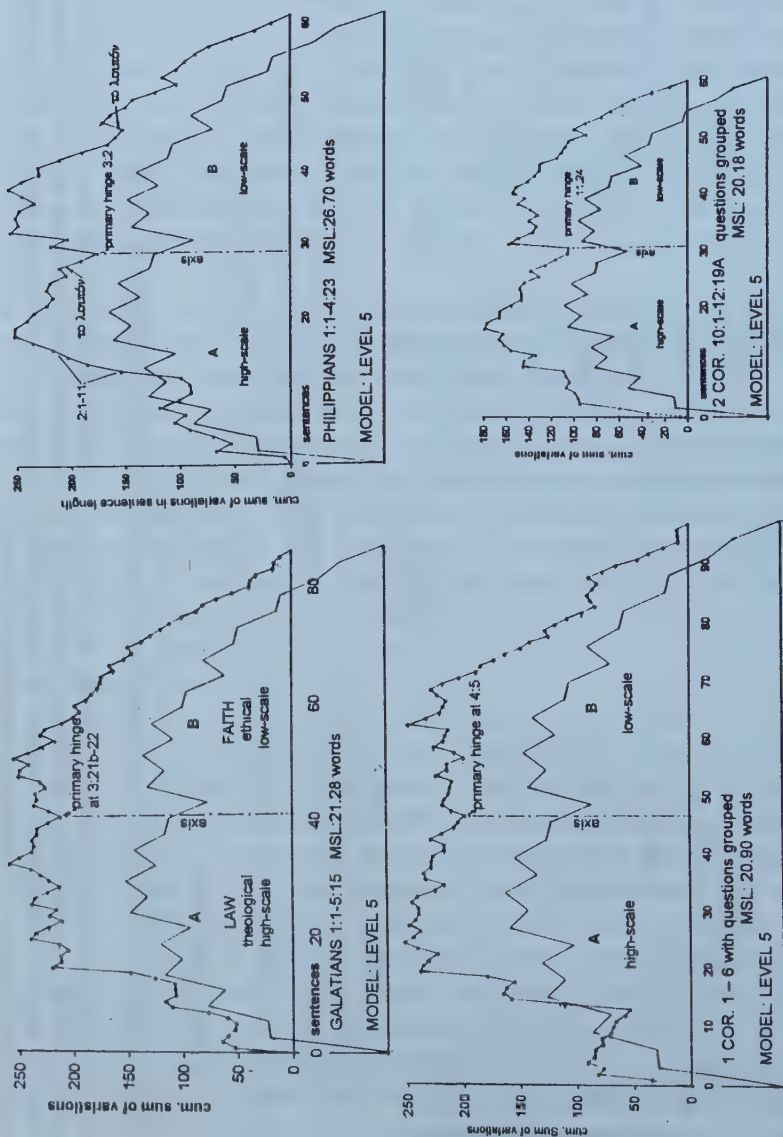


Fig. 2 These four prime patterns are all compared with Level 5 of the Model. They show the characteristic stepped pattern due to alternating groups of longer and shorter sentences, and also the division into high-scale (A) and low-scale (B) sections. Romans 1-14 provides a prime pattern which is a scaled-up version of Galatians. Romans 15 and 16 provide "afterthought" type patterns.

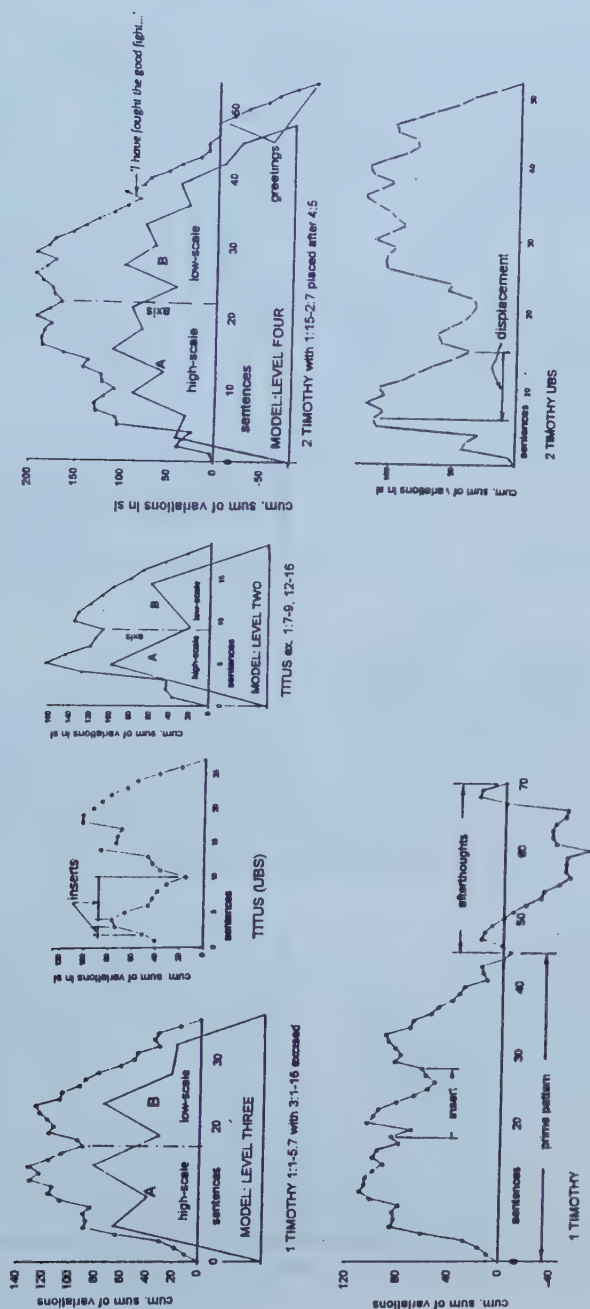
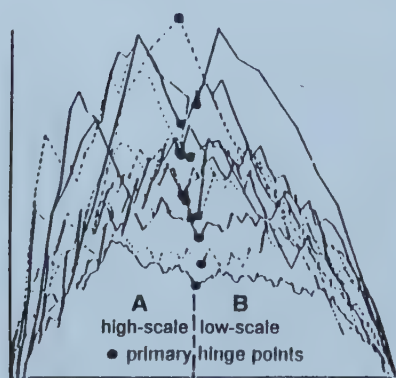
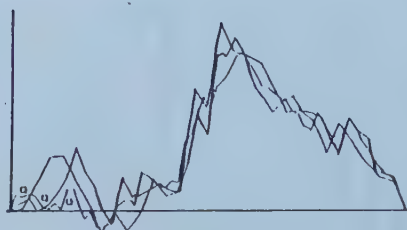


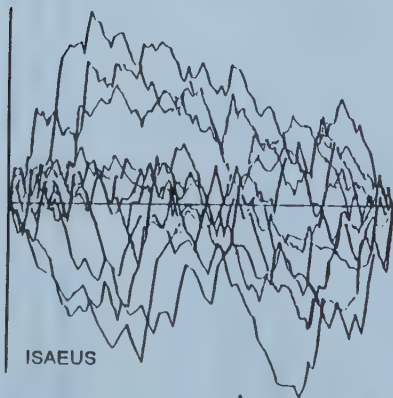
Fig. 3 Both 1 Timothy and Titus contain advice concerning church leaders. When the insertions are removed, the prime pattern of 1 Timothy (upper left) corresponds to Level 3 of the model, and Titus (lower right) corresponds to Level 2. The prime pattern of 2 Timothy (upper right) is restored when 1:15-2:7 is placed after 4:5. The greetings in 2 Timothy do not form part of the prime pattern and appear below the base line. Note the characteristic stepped pattern and high-scale and low-scale sections in these prime patterns.



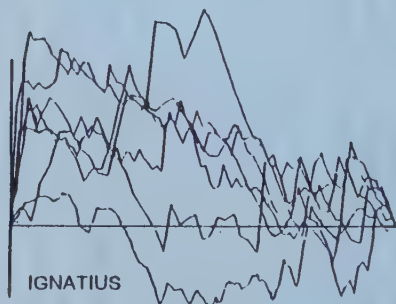
PAUL: 13 PRIME PATTERNS



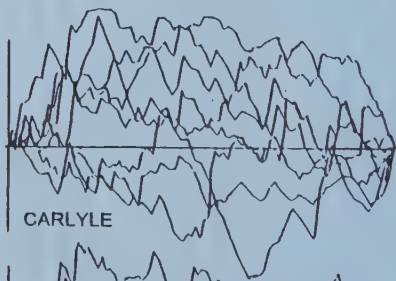
SILVANUS: PRIME PATTERNS
HEBREWS, 1 AND 2 PETER



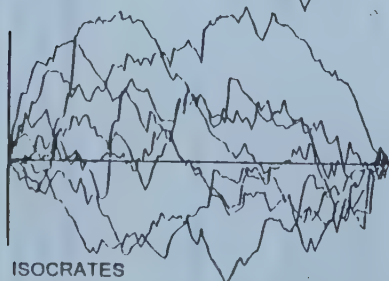
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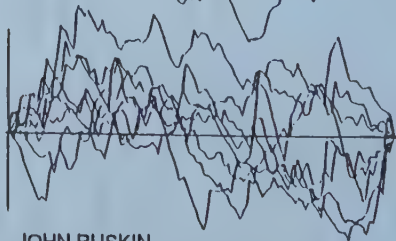
IGNATIUS



CARLYLE



ISOCRATES



JOHN RUSKIN

GRAPHS OF WORKS BY SEVERAL AUTHORS DRAWN ON A STANDARD BASE

Fig. 4 Of these seven authors Paul and Silvanus show well-formed prime patterns of different types. These are scale-related and persist despite differences in the lengths of the works. Several of the epistles of Ignatius consistently show other features. The other authors show little consistency in their patterns.

Even in a protected academic environment the development of a student's thought can be astonishingly rapid; a student can mature considerably during a three-year course. But perhaps a better parallel to Paul's life may be found in the case of a young and immature schoolboy who joined the forces in 1939, and after seeing much violent death at close quarters emerged in 1945 a much older man, mature beyond his years.

There is no time to systematise Paul's thought, though systematic theologians love to try. Things moved too quickly; Paul dealt with so many changing situations, responding to each one as it arose. Pauline theologies are modern inventions, constructed for the most part on a limited selection of Pauline epistles by which "Paul" is defined, and within the conventions of modern academic study. The process is circular and usually fails to reveal the Paul who could speak gutter Greek to the common people and who tackled their half-understood folklore, holding up in its place a vision of the living Lord.

The scalometric evidence will not now allow such a narrow base to be selected for our understanding of Paul. In fig. 4 the comparison between the prime patterns of Paul and Silvanus and the graphs of other authors' works demonstrates the distinctiveness of the prime patterns. Of the others only Ignatius shows the kind of consistency in some of his works that constitutes a prime pattern, which in his case is quite different from those of Paul and Silvanus.

The scalometric evidence is strong. If this is disputed, then alternative explanations for these patterns must be given. It shows that there is a Pauline prime pattern in each one of the thirteen epistles. Only the passages in 1 Timothy and Titus concerning church leaders can be accepted as second century marginal notes that have been incorporated in the text. These insertions excepted, all the Pauline texts have to be fitted into the period of his travels and his last days in Rome. Likewise, the Petrones and Hebrews are tied by their patterns, and Jude is tied to 2 Peter, giving an insight into another apostolic mission in Asia Minor and a dating within the same period, between 56 and 60 AD.

I realise that this scenario is very much at odds with mainstream New Testament scholarship. It does not arise from any extreme fundamentalist disposition on my part, but this is the direction in which the scalometric evidence points. I shall be glad to receive criticism from others who have investigated scale in literature, and have done original research to substantiate their view.

George K. Barr
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David's Lament for Abner (2 Samuel 3: 33-34)

Dr D. Rudman

David's brief lament for Abner in 2 Sam 3:33-34 has presented commentators with something of a puzzle, not so much from any evident corruption of the text, as from its obscurity of meaning. The rendering of the Hebrew provided by the NRSV is typical of modern English translations:

The king lamented for Abner, saying:

“Should Abner die as a fool (נבל) dies?

Your hands were not bound (לא אסרוּת),

your feet were not fettered (לא לנחשחים הנשור);

As one falls before the wicked

you have fallen.”

Then all the people wept over him again.

The differing views of modern commentators may be seen in the treatments of Smith and Keil at the end of the last century. The former, citing Prov 7:22-23 as justification, states that “the fool brings an early death upon himself by his reckless judgement...Abner had not even the honour of being made a prisoner of war, or of suffering death after being overwhelmed in battle.”⁶ Yet, being taken prisoner is certainly no honour, as the

⁶ H. P. Smith, *Samuel* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1899) 282, cf. P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB9; Garden City: Doubleday, 1984) 119.

story of Samson, who is bound in fetters ויאסרוהו בנחשחים –v.34, cf. Judg 16:21) and made sport of by his captors (Judg 16:25), demonstrates. By contrast, Keil understands the thrust of the dirge to be that Abner had not made himself guilty of a crime so as to die, like a prisoner, in chains. Rather, he was murdered.⁷

Keil is probably correct to point out the judicial element in the lament suggested by the imagery of chains and fetters. As far as David is concerned, Abner has committed no offence: just as Ishbaal in 2 Sam 4:11 is said to have been איש צדיק (“a righteous man”) murdered by אנשים רשעים (“wicked men”), Abner is said to have fallen before בני עולה (“unjust men” [NRSV: “the wicked”]). A consideration of the term נבל throws further light on this lament. One could read the opening of the lament as a reference to David's previous encounter with Nabal (נבל) in 1 Samuel 25 and translate accordingly “Should Abner have died like Nabal?” (as in fact does the Septuagint).⁸ While Nabal was not brought before David in chains and executed, several points of contact between the fates of Abner and Nabal suggest themselves and make an allusion seem likely.

When Nabal offends David by withholding from him the supplies which the latter demanded as payment for the “protection” given to his servants and livestock in the wilderness, David makes the claim that in so doing the rich landowner “has paid me evil (רעה) for good” (25:21) and sets out on a punitive expedition. Nabal's wife Abigail, however, successfully intercedes with David to prevent the slaughter of the men of her household (25:23-35) and the latter returns home. On hearing of the news of Nabal's death at the instigation of Yahweh, David declares with obvious satisfaction,

⁷ C. F. Keil, *Samuel* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1875; reprint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 304, cf. H. W. Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel* (OTL; London:SCM, 1964) 261-2.

⁸ On Tense of verb, see S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1890) 193..

"Blessed be Yahweh who took my part in the case of Nabal's insult to me...*Yahweh has returned the evil of Nabal on his own head*"

(וַאֲתָ רַעַת נָבָל הָשִׁיב יְהוָה בְּרָאשׁוֹ) (25:39).

This episode, which is interposed between David's dealings with Saul (1 Samuel 24, 26), is paradigmatic for the whole of the Story of David's Rise.⁹ The narrator of this tale is concerned to counter possible charges that David murdered his way to the throne by demonstrating how Yahweh himself removed the obstacles which stood in the way of David's advancement. Abigail prevents David's bloody revenge on Nabal not just with gifts, but with a warning to David about the consequences of incurring blood-guilt (1 Sam 25:30-32). With Nabal despatched shortly thereafter by Yahweh (25:38), it is a noticeably more self-assured David who can pass up the opportunity of killing Saul, his persecutor, saying, "As Yahweh lives, Yahweh will strike him down, or his day will come to die, or he will descend into battle and perish" (26:10).¹⁰ David's confidence in Yahweh proves well-founded, since not only Saul but three of his sons, including the heir-apparent Jonathan, will subsequently die in the battle on Mount Gilboa (1 Samuel 31).

Many commentators likewise ascribe the deaths of Abner and Ishbaal to Yahweh, and indeed it is difficult not to feel that such is the case.¹¹ However, this is not stated explicitly by David as we find with Nabal and Saul. Rather, David stresses the inappropriateness of their fate: Abner has fallen before "unjust men" and Ishbaal is likewise "a righteous man" slain by "wicked men." Though David mourns Saul and executes the Amalekite who claims to have dealt

⁹ R. P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel* (OTG; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984) 64.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹¹ A few, such as N. P. Lemche ("David's Rise," *JSOT* 10 [1978] 2-25) and J. C. VanderKam ("Davidic Complicity in the deaths of Abner and Eshbaal," *JBL* 99 [1980] 521-539) see David rather than Yahweh as the "grey eminence" behind these killings.

Israel's king the fatal blow, he does not extol his opponent's righteousness in the way that he does with Abner and Ishbaal.

David's lament therefore makes a contrast between the fates of Nabal and Abner rather than a comparison. The former is introduced to the reader as "harsh and an evildoer" (קשה ורע מעללים) (1 Sam 25:3). He sought to hinder David's progress and was struck down by Yahweh for this "crime." The latter had entered into an alliance with David (2 Sam 3:12-13) and is struck down not by Yahweh, but by the "harsh" (קשים) sons of Zeruiah, led by the "evildoer" (עשה הרעה) Joab (3:39).¹²

The answer to the question, "Should Abner have died like Nabal?" is negative. The judicial imagery of fetters and shackles in David's lament underlines the fact that Abner had not followed the path of Nabal in continuing his resistance to David, and thereby exposed himself to a deserved punishment. Rather, it is Abner's killers who have become like Nabal by their action. The parallel thereby created between the murderers of Abner and David's former adversary is heightened by David's wish that Joab suffer the appropriate consequences for the killing (2 Sam 3:29) as did Nabal for his attempt to oppose David (1 Sam 25:39). It may fairly be said that David laments not just the death of Abner, but a world in which the reins of fate may prove as slippery for him as they did for the Israelite general.

D. C. Rudman

¹² The only other person in the story of David's Rise of whom the terms קשה and רעה are used in close proximity is Saul (1 Sam 20, 7, 9, 13 [קשה], 10 [רעה]). Abigail's words in 1 Sam 25:26, "let your enemies and all who intend harm (רעה) to my lord be like Nabal (כנבל)" prepare the reader psychologically for the death of Saul, who lives and dies like Nabal (cf. D. M. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* [JSOTS 14; Sheffield: JSOT, 1980] 96-103; R. P. Gordon, "David's Rise and Saul's Demise: Narrative Analogy in 1 Samuel 24-26," *TB* 31 [1980] 37-64).

Paul: The Man and the Myth by Calvin J. Roetzel. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999. 320 pages, Thirteen Pounds and ninety-five pence. ISBN 0 567 086 98 4.

The author of an excellent introduction to the Pauline letters [*The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context* SCM Press 1983] has now produced an intriguing and original study of the great man himself. Roetzel combines a detailed knowledge of the latest scholarly research on Paul along with some penetrating insights of his own to produce an essential guide to the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Roetzel insists that it is misleading to do what most theologians have done, namely to stitch together a patchwork of theological ideas drawn from the seven undisputed letters of Paul in order to produce a 'definitive' theology of the great missionary. This does a disservice to the apostle, for his theology is 'emergent rather than systematic.' One should speak not of the theology of Paul, but of the theologizing of Paul, for he develops his theological thinking in response to circumstances, rather than sitting down to write a thesis. For this reason Roetzel prefers to outline how Paul's theology develops through a sequence of the letters.

Indeed Paul's ingenious adopting and adapting of the letter is a vital part of his achievement. Roetzel finds an interesting analogy to this in modern times. "Like Italian American immigrants in America who read letters from 'home' in the public square, who rejoiced together over good news and grieved over bad, and who delighted in the contact that letters brought with friends and relatives left behind, letter recipients in the ancient world also shared the mood of the writer and read or circulated the letter in a broader circle (e.g. see 1 Thess. 5.27)."

Roetzel feels most scholars have neglected Paul's role as 'model ascetic' with a public preference for celibacy as a divine gift [1 Cor. 7:7]. He devotes considerable space in putting Paul's asceticism into the context of his time. He claims that "Paul's celibacy was rooted in Jewish and Hellenistic traditions, a christological focus on the cross and Jesus' self-denial, an apocalyptic mind-set, and an eschatological reserve emphasizing a continuing struggle."

The Book of Acts is not a source for Paul's life, but rather "a canonical historical novel". In Acts Luke paints a picture of Paul as 'a powerful charismatic personality who validated his gospel with miraculous deeds.' But Luke failed to take account of the Paul revealed in the letters, a weak and sickly personality, unskilled in speech and unimposing in appearance. Roetzel concludes, "Acts reveals none of the gripping tension between power and weakness that we have in Paul's own self description (2 Cor. 11-12)."

Roetzel considers that the sermons that 'Paul' preaches in Acts are not authentic, but he believes that it is possible to reconstruct Paul's actual preaching from the theological emphases of the letters. He outlines the ideas that would be central to Paul's proclamation. Paul the preacher would point firstly to the need of mankind, who is in bondage. Then He would indicate the work of Christ, his self-emptying, his birth from the seed of David, his death for our sins, his burial, his resurrection, his exaltation, and his return as judge. In response to this Paul's audience is required to embrace repentance of sins, renouncing of pagan gods, acceptance of Jesus as Messiah, belief in his resurrection, and submission to baptism as a participation in Jesus' death.

Roetzel's study is worth reading for the originality of its treatment of a well-known subject and will serve as a valuable reference book for preachers and teachers.

Dennis Campbell